

09/831583

JC07 Rec'd POT/PTO 10 MAY 2001

Practitioner's Docket No. 6171-2

CHAPTER II

Preliminary Classification:

Proposed Class:

Subclass:

TRANSMITTAL LETTER
TO THE UNITED STATES ELECTED OFFICE (EO/US)

(ENTRY INTO U.S. NATIONAL PHASE UNDER CHAPTER II)

EP99/07961	20 October 1999 (20.10.99)	12 November 1998 (12.11.98)
International Application Number	International Filing Date	International Earliest Priority Date

TITLE OF INVENTION: BATTERY SLEEVE MADE OF COLD-ROLLED SHEET METAL AND
PROCESS FOR MANUFACTURING BATTERY SLEEVESAPPLICANT(S): SCHMIDT, Ferdinand; SCHENCK, Anette; MONSCHEUER, Beate ; KOSSLERS,
Helmut ; FERENCZY, Dr. Nikolaus; BORISCH, Annette; and OLBERDING, Dr. Werner

Box PCT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents

Washington D.C. 20231

ATTENTION: EO/US

CERTIFICATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. SECTION 1.10*

(Express Mail label number is **mandatory**.)(Express Mail certification is **optional**.)

I hereby certify that this paper, along with any document referred to, is being deposited with the United States Postal Service on this date May 11, 2001 in an envelope as "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee," mailing Label Number_EL764143377US, addressed to the: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231.

Michael H. Minns

(type or print name of person mailing paper)


Signature of person mailing paper

(Transmittal Letter to the United States Elected Office (EO/US)--page 1 of 4)

1. Applicant herewith submits to the United States Elected Office (EO/US) the following items under 35 U.S.C. Section 371:

- a. This express request to immediately begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. Section 371(f)).
- b. The U.S. National Fee (35 U.S.C. Section 371(c)(1)) and other fees (37 C.F.R. Section 1.492) as indicated below:

2. Fees

CLAIMS FEE*	(1) FOR	(2) NUMBER FILED	(3) NUMBER EXTRA	(4) RATE	(5) CALCULATIONS
BASIC FEE	TOTAL CLAIMS	20 -20 =	0	x \$18.00 =	\$0.00
	INDEPENDENT CLAIMS	3 -3 =	0	x \$80.00 =	\$0.00
	MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM(S) (if applicable) + \$270.00				\$0.00
	U.S. PTO WAS NOT INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION AUTHORITY Where no international preliminary examination fee as set forth in Section 1.482 has been paid to the U.S. PTO, and payment of an international search fee as set forth in Section 1.445(a)(2) to the U.S. PTO: where a search report on the international application has been prepared by the European Patent Office or the Japanese Patent Office (37 C.F.R. Section 1.492(a)(5)) \$860.00				\$860.00
SMALL ENTITY	Total of above Calculations				= \$860.00
	Reduction by 1/2 for filing by small entity, if applicable. Affidavit must be filed. (note 37 CFR Sections 1.9, 1.27, 1.28)				- \$0.00
	Subtotal				\$860.00
	Total National Fee				\$860.00
	Fee for recording the enclosed assignment document \$40.00 (37 C.F.R. Section 1.21(h)). See attached "ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET".				\$0.00
TOTAL	Total Fees enclosed				\$860.00

*See attached Preliminary Amendment Reducing the Number of Claims.

A check in the amount of \$860.00 to cover the above fees is enclosed.

3. A copy of the International application as filed (35 U.S.C. Section 371(c)(2)) has been transmitted by the International Bureau.

Date of mailing of the application (from form PCT/IB/308): 29 November 1999

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4. A translation of the International application into the English language (35 U.S.C. Section 371(c)(2)) is transmitted herewith.
5. A copy of the international examination report (PCT/IPEA/409) is transmitted herewith.
6. Annex(es) to the international preliminary examination report is/are transmitted herewith.
7. A translation of the annexes to the international preliminary examination report is transmitted herewith.
8. An oath or declaration of the inventor (35 U.S.C. Section 371(c)(4)) complying with 35 U.S.C. Section 115 is submitted herewith, and such oath or declaration identifies the application that was transmitted as stated in Section 3 and states that they were reviewed by the inventor as required by 37 C.F.R. Section 1.70.

II. Other document(s) or information included:

9. An International Search Report (PCT/ISA/210) or Declaration under PCT Article 17(2)(a) is transmitted herewith.
10. An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 C.F.R. Sections 1.97 and 1.98 is transmitted herewith.

Also transmitted herewith is/are Form PTO-1449 (PTO/SB/08A and 08B) and copies of citations listed.

11. Additional documents:
 - a. Copy of request (PCT/RO/101)
 - b. International Publication No. WO00/30188
Front page only
 - c. Preliminary amendment (37 C.F.R. Section 1.121)
12. The above items are being transmitted before 30 months from any claimed priority date.

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AUTHORIZATION TO CHARGE ADDITIONAL FEES

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the following additional fees that may be required by this paper and during the entire pendency of this application to Account No.: 15-0450

37 C.F.R. Section 1.492(a)(1), (2), (3), and (4) (filing fees)

37 C.F.R. Section 1.492(b), (c), and (d) (presentation of extra claims)


37 C.F.R. Section 1.17 (application processing fees)

37 C.F.R. Section 1.17(a)(1)-(5) (extension fees pursuant to Section 1.136(a))

Date:

May 11, 2001

Reg. No.: 31,985
Tel. No.: 330-864-5550
Customer No.: 021324



Signature of Practitioner

Michael H. Minns
Oldham & Oldham Co., L.P.A.
Twin Oaks Estate
1225 West Market Street
Akron, OH 44313-7188
USA

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Schmidt, et al.

Examiner:

Ser. No.:

Art Group:

Title: BATTERY SHEATH MADE OF FORMED COLD-ROLLED SHEET METAL
AND METHOD OF MANUFACTURING BATTERY SHEATHS

Filed: May 11, 2001

Date: May 11, 2001

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

This Preliminary Amendment is filed with the filing of the above case, which is a national stage entry of PCT/EP99/07961, filed 20 October 1999, which in turn claims priority from German application 198 52 202.9, filed 12 November 1998. The fees for the claims should be calculated based on the claims remaining after the entry of this Preliminary Amendment, which results in 20 total and 2 independent claims. Consistent with the modifications to 37 CFR §1.121, the applicant has provided the amended claims in a clean form on the enclosed replacement sheets.

Amendments to the Disclosure

A clean copy of the specification is provided herewith to provide headings and to insert paragraph numbering. No new matter is added.

Amendments to the Figures

None at this time.

Amendments to the Claims

After the heading "CLAIMS" and before the beginning of the claims, please insert the words: -- What is claimed is: --

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (amended) A battery [Battery] sheath made of formed cold-rolled sheet metal, which is provided at least on an [its] inside surface thereof with [a coating produced by electroplating] an electroplated coating selected from a group of metals consisting of [containing] Ni, Co, Fe, Sn,

In, Pd, Bi and [and/or their] alloys thereof, wherein [characterized in that to reduce the internal resistance of the future battery,] electrically conductive particles are embedded in dispersed form in the electroplated coating [, for example, elemental carbon in the form of fine carbon, graphite or carbon black or, for example, titanium disulfide, tantalum disulfide or molybdenum silicide or mixtures thereof].

2. (amended) The battery [Battery] sheath according to Claim 17 wherein [1 characterized in that the carbon content of] the electroplated coating contains at least [is] 0.7% elemental carbon [to 15%].

3. (amended) The battery [Battery] sheath according to Claim 1 wherein [or Claim 2 characterized in that the thickness of] the electroplated coating has a thickness of at least [is] 0.2 μm [to 8 μm on one or on both sides].

4. (amended) A process [Process] for manufacturing strip stock for battery sheaths in which 0.1 to 1 mm thick cold-rolled sheet metal is provided on at least one side with a coating selected from a group consisting of Ni, Co, Fe, Sn, In, Pd, Bi and [and/or their] alloys thereof, in an electroplating bath, whereby the electroplating bath comprises as an additional component electrically conductive particles such that the particles are [as, for example, elemental carbon as fine carbon, graphite or carbon black or, for example, titanium disulfide, tantalum disulfide or molybdenum silicide, whereby this/these component(s) is/are] deposited on the sheet metal [base material] during electroplating together with the coating [Ni, Co, Fe, Sn, In, Pd, Bi or their alloys].

5. (amended) The process [Process] according to Claim 20 wherein [4 characterized in that] the sheet metal is coated [side] with the electroplating coating provided with the electrically conductive particles on the side that [components] faces inwardly when the sheet metal is formed into a battery sheath.

6. (amended) The process [Process] according to Claim 20 wherein [3 or Claim 4 characterized in that] the carbon is suspended in the electroplating bath as finely distributed carbon, graphite, or carbon black particles.
7. (amended) The process [Process] according to Claim 6 characterized by a particle size of the carbon, graphite, or carbon black particles of 0.5 μm to 15 μm .
8. (amended) The process [A procedure] according to claim 4 wherein [one of claims 4 to 6 characterized in that] a steady flow is created in the plating electrolyte tank during the plating process.
9. (amended) The process [Process] according to Claim 8 characterized in that the steady [uniform] flow is produced by mechanical agitation, circulation, or flooding.
10. (amended) The process [Process] according to Claim 8 [or Claim 9] characterized by a forced flow velocity of the electrolyte of 6 to 10 m/s.
11. (amended) The process [Process] according to claim 8 [one of Claims 8 to 10] characterized in that the electroplating bath contains suspension stabilizing and/or coagulation reducing substances.
12. (amended) The process of claim 4 wherein [A procedure according to one of claims 4 to 11 characterized in that] the plating electrolyte contains substances that produce hard, brittle layers (the so-called brighteners).
13. (amended) The process of claim 4 wherein [A procedure according to one of claims 4 to 12 characterized in that] the plating electrolyte contains brighteners or pore-sealing substances.
14. (amended) The process of claim 20 wherein [A procedure according to one of claims 4 to 13 characterized in that] the electrolytic deposition occurs in several stages, and [that, in at

least one of these stages,] the electrolyte contains elemental [elementary] carbon in at least one said stage.

15. (amended) The process of [Process according to] Claim 14 wherein [characterized in that] the material is heat-treated or annealed between electroplating treatment stages.

16. (amended) The process of claim 14 wherein [Process according to Claim 14 characterized in that] the material is heat-treated, particularly annealed, at the end of the electroplating treatment stages.

Please add the following new claims:

17. (new) The battery sheath of claim 1 wherein the electrically conductive particles are selected from a group consisting of: titanium disulfide, tantalum disulfide, molybdenum silicide, elemental carbon in the form of fine carbon, graphite or carbon black, and combinations thereof.

18. (new) The battery sheath according to Claim 2 wherein the electroplated coating contains no more than 15% elemental carbon.

19. (new) The battery sheath according to Claim 3 wherein the electroplated coating has a thickness of no more than 8 μm .

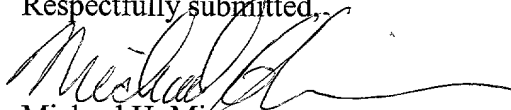
20. (new) The process of claim 4 wherein the electrically conductive particles are selected from a group consisting of: titanium disulfide, tantalum disulfide, molybdenum silicide, elemental carbon in the form of fine carbon, graphite or carbon black, and combinations thereof.

REMARKS

The claims have been amended above to put them more into the standard US claiming form, by eliminating multiple dependencies and trying to eliminate any problems with antecedent basis. A clean copy of the claims as amended is provided in addition to the clean copy of the specification.

The new claims are for the purpose of either break up instances of alternative claiming or to eliminate multiple dependencies.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael H. Minns

Reg. No. 31,985

Oldham & Oldham Co. LPA

1225 W. Market St.

Akron, OH 44313

330-864-5550

Fax 330-864-7986

Email: Minns@oldhamlaw.com

Customer No. 021324

Battery Sheath Made of Formed Cold-Rolled Sheet Metal and Process for
Manufacturing Battery Sheaths

The invention relates first to a battery sheath made of formed cold-rolled sheet metal, which is provided at least on its inside with a coating produced by electroplating containing Ni, Co, Fe, Sn, In, Pd, Bi and/or their alloys.

The invention relates furthermore to a process for manufacturing strip stock for battery sheaths wherein cold-rolled sheet metal is provided with a coating in an electroplating bath.

The quality of batteries is determined among other things by how long the guaranteed nominal voltage and capacity can be retained. The higher the battery's internal resistance, the lower the voltage of the battery in its charged state. A further important characteristic for the quality of a battery is its behavior during prolonged storage. Long storage causes the internal resistance of the battery to increase. The internal resistance as well as its increase during prolonged storage depend on several factors: during manufacture of the battery, there is frequently inadequate contact between the electrode made, for example, of nickel-plated steel sheet and the battery filling made of EMD manganese dioxide, graphite, and potassium hydroxide electrolyte. It is furthermore decisive for the increase in the internal resistance of the battery that during storage an oxide/hydroxide layer forms on the nickel surface, which acts like a separation layer and prevents intimate contact with the filling. This phenomenon can occur even with newly manufactured batteries if the battery sheaths provided with a nickel coating on the inside are oxidized.

Battery manufacturers have already taken a number of measures to obviate these disadvantages. It is known, for example, to notch the battery sheath axially in order to apply increased radial pressure along the notch during filling of the battery and thus to improve contact with the battery sheath. This does not, however, uniformly reduce the resistance. It is furthermore known to apply graphite powder to the inside of the battery sheath to reduce the internal resistance of the battery after filling. Such a method is complex and thus expensive.

WO 98/18170 discloses a process for coating the electrodes during the production of electrodes for batteries by covering them with a varnish. The varnish contains an electrode-active material, binder, solvent, and acid. After one side of the electrode has been coated, the layer thus produced is first dried before the other side of the electrode is correspondingly coated.

The Japanese publication JP-A H 9-171802 discloses the manufacture of a battery sheath, in which the inside is provided with an organic coating and carbonization occurs through subsequent heating of the coated surface. The coated surface can furthermore have additional layers of metallic chromium or chromium hydroxide.

The object of the invention is to create a battery sheath for manufacturing batteries that are distinguished by a reduced increase in the internal resistance during prolonged storage as compared to known batteries. Furthermore, a process for producing strip stock for manufacturing such battery sheaths is to be developed.

For a battery sheath of the initially described type, it is proposed for this purpose to embed electrically conductive particles in dispersed form in the electroplated coating to reduce the internal resistance of the future battery, for example, elemental carbon as fine carbon, graphite, or carbon black or, for example, titanium disulfide, tantalum disulfide or molybdenum silicide or mixtures thereof.

When carbon is used, the carbon content of the electroplated coating is 0.7% to 15%. The thickness of the electroplated coating is preferably 0.2 μm to 8 μm on one or on both sides of the strip stock, which is to be processed into battery sheaths.

With respect to the process suitable for manufacturing strip stock for such a battery sheath it is proposed that the 0.1 to 1 mm thick cold rolled sheet metal used as the base material be provided on at least one side with a coating of Ni, Co, Fe, Sn, In, Pd, Bi and/or their alloys in an electroplating bath. As an additional component, the electroplating bath contains electrically conductive particles such as, for example, elemental carbon as fine carbon, graphite or carbon black or, for example, titanium disulfide, tantalum disulfide or molybdenum silicide, whereby this/these component(s)

is/are deposited on the base material together with Ni, Co, Fe, Sn, In, Pd, Bi or their alloys during electroplating.

Preferably, the sheet metal side with the electroplating layer provided with the electrically conductive components faces inwardly when the sheet metal is formed into a battery sheath.

Batteries with battery sheaths manufactured by means of such a process are distinguished by a reduced increase in the internal resistance during prolonged storage as compared to known batteries. Furthermore, the initial internal resistance itself of batteries whose battery sheaths are manufactured according to the inventive process can be significantly lower than that of conventional battery sheaths, which are, for example, simply made of nickel plated steel strip.

Said advantages with respect to the internal resistance of the battery are achieved, in particular, with coatings that combine the elements nickel, cobalt, and graphite. However, layers deposited using iron, tin, indium, palladium and bismuth, or alloys of said elements, have also proven to be suitable for battery sheath coatings.

When using carbon suspended in the electroplating bath, finely distributed electrically conductive particles of elemental carbon (graphite or carbon black) come primarily into consideration. The particle size preferably ranges from 0.5 to 15 μm .

To achieve the intended embedding of the carbon in dispersed form within the electroplated coating, one embodiment of the process proposes that a uniform flow be produced in the electroplating bath during the plating process. To achieve this uniform flow, the electroplating bath is preferably uniformly circulated. A forced velocity of flow of the electrolyte of 6 to 10 m/s has proven to be particularly suitable.

A further embodiment of the invention proposes that the electroplating bath contain suspension stabilizing and/or coagulation reducing substances in order to achieve a uniform distribution of the electrically conductive particles without local or time-related concentrations.

It may also be advantageous to provide the electroplating bath with stabilizing and/or coagulation reducing substances that result in hard brittle coatings, as is the case, for example, with so-called brighteners. Furthermore, the added substances can also act as brightening or pore reducing agents.

In one embodiment of the process, electroplating deposition occurs in several stages, wherein the electroplating bath contains elemental carbon in at least one of these stages. The material is preferably annealed between electroplating treatment stages. A final heat treatment, i.e. at the end of single or multi-stage deposition, may also be provided. Thermal annealing takes place in a protective gas atmosphere at a temperature ranging from 550° C to 920° C as a function of the steel quality used. Thermal annealing causes the substrate to recrystallize and the deposited nickel / cobalt / iron / tin / indium / palladium / bismuth to diffuse into the base material. In addition to the actual recrystallization of the substrate to permit subsequent forming, this also results in good adhesion of the processing layer to the base material during forming and, furthermore, good corrosion protection properties of the product.

In multi-stage deposition, wherein the electrolytic bath contains carbon in at least one of these stages, the stages can be arranged in immediate succession so that different partial coatings are successively deposited in an on-line operation. However, heat treatment by annealing of the material may also be introduced between electroplating stages to achieve partial diffusion of the deposited metal layer into the base material. It is furthermore possible to work in three or more stages, whereby a plating stage with carbon particles is executed between two or more platings with graphite-free electrolytes. In this case, too, heat treatment by annealing may be provided between the individual plating stages.

The base material for manufacturing the battery sheaths is cold-rolled strip, which in electro-nickel-plated form is widely used for manufacturing battery sheaths. According to the invention, the electroplating bath comprises not only Ni, Co, Fe, Sn, In, Pd and/or Bi but also conductive particles of fine carbon, graphite, carbon black, TaS₂ (tantalum disulfide), TiS₂ (titanium disulfide) or MoSi₂ (molybdenum silicide) finely distributed in the form of a suspension. During electrolytic treatment of the cold-rolled sheet metal, following prior degreasing, rinsing, pickling, rinsing, etc., a joint deposition of both the

mentioned elements and the conductive particles is formed on the surface. There are two different methods to achieve uniform application to the coated surfaces and to keep the state and the composition of the electrolyte constant:

In the first method, for example, finely distributed carbon particles or graphite or carbon black with a particle size ranging from 0.5 to 15 μm are suspended in the electrolyte, e.g., a Watts-type nickel electrolyte, and are kept in suspension by strong agitation of the electrolyte bath. To achieve this motion, a mixer may be used or a forced flow produced in some other manner. The second method also uses mechanical agitation of the electroplating bath. In addition, however, additives to keep the suspension uniform and prevent flocculation and coagulation of the particles are added to the electroplating bath.

It is advantageous to deposit the metal layer that contains the electrically conductive particles and, in particular, the carbon on only one side of the steel sheet, namely on the side that will subsequently form the inside of the finished battery sheath. This results in an efficient manufacturing process and furthermore makes it possible to retain the usual surface for the outside of the battery sheath. However, it may be advantageous for special applications if a carbon-containing metal layer is also present on the outside of the battery sheath. In this context, reduced contact resistance of the battery sheath or improved tribological properties may, for example, be the goal. Forming of the battery sheath is carried out by one of the processes known per se using multi-stage forming by ironing or deep drawing the sheet thus processed according to the invention.

Cold-rolled steel strip can be treated, for example, in a specially designed plant for strip processing as follows:

- electrolytic degreasing with high current density of 30 – 50 A/dm^2
- rinsing
- pickling in 3 – 5% sulfuric acid
- rinsing
- nickel plating in a Watts-type nickel bath having the following composition:
 - nickel 50 – 80 g/l as nickel sulfate
 - chloride 10 – 30 g/l as nickel chloride

- boric acid 35 – 45 g/l
- carbon 20 – 80 g/l, particle size 0.5 – 15 μm
- pH value 2.1 – 3.5
- temperature 55 – 80° C
- current density 5 – 20 A/dm²
- agitation primarily laminar, partly turbulent
- electrolyte flow 6 – 10 m/s

A further variant of processing by electroplating consists in adding suspension stabilizing and coagulation preventing substances to the bath. These can be, for example, condensation products of formaldehyde and naphthalenesulfonic acid, furthermore ethylene glycol and ethylene alcohol. In this case, the turbulent agitation may be somewhat reduced, whereby an electrolyte flow of 2 – 8 m/s has proven to be suitable.

The nickel layers produced as specified above measure 0.2 – 8 μm . The graphite (C) content in the nickel layer is 0.7 – 15%.

It has furthermore been found that instead of nickel in the C dispersion layer, cobalt, iron, tin, indium, palladium, bismuth and/or their alloys can be advantageously used, whereby the composition of the cobalt bath including graphite corresponds to the aforementioned nickel bath.

Example 1:

Strip stock of 0.2 – 0.45 mm thick steel is nickel plated in a nickel bath after degreasing, rinsing, pickling, rinsing, as follows:

Nickel bath composition:

Nickel	60 g/l as nickel sulfate
Chloride	30 g/l as nickel chloride
Boric acid	40 g/l
Graphite	40 g/l, grain size 1 – 8 μm
pH value	2.3
Temperature	60° C

Current density	15 A/dm ²
Agitation	turbulent
Electrolyte flow	6 – 10 m/s

The coating thus produced contains approximately 1.7% graphite.

Example 2:

The composition of the nickel bath corresponds to that given in Example 1. However, suspension stabilizing agents and coagulation preventing substance are added. Agitation is more moderate; electrolyte flow is only approximately 4 m/s. The graphite content of the deposited nickel layer is 9.0%.

The layer structure produced according to Examples 1 and 2 can have the following composition:

The total layer thickness of 0.2 – 2 μm is produced with graphite inclusions. According to a variant, a nickel layer of 1.0 – 1.5 μm without graphite inclusions may be produced first. After annealing and skin-passing an additional layer of approximately 0.3 – 0.5 μm with graphite inclusions is deposited.

Example 3:

Manufacture of Nickel-Cobalt with Graphite Inclusions

For producing nickel cobalt coatings with graphite inclusions, thickness and composition of the strip stock used are identical to Example 1. Pretreatment is also identical. First, pure nickel is deposited from the electrolyte as described in Example 1, without graphite inclusions. After annealing and skin-passing the second layer is produced in a cobalt electrolyte with graphite inclusion.

A pure cobalt coating with graphite inclusions is also possible.

Example 4:

Manufacture of Nickel-Iron Alloys with Carbon Inclusions (Graphite, Carbon Black)

After the known pretreatment (see Example 1), the strip surface is coated with an electrolyte of the following composition:

Nickel	47 g/l as nickel sulfate
Chloride	15 g/l as nickel chloride
Iron	1 – 4 g/l as iron(II) sulfate
Boric acid	45 g/l
Graphite	40 g/l, grain size 1 – 8 μm
pH value	2.3
Temperature	60° C
Current density	2 – 12 A/dm ²
Fe content in precipitate	4 – 55% depending on Fe concentration and current density

Example 5:

Manufacture of Nickel-Tin Alloys with Carbon Inclusions (Graphite, Carbon Black)

Tin	25 g/l as tin chloride
Nickel	60 g/l as nickel chloride
Fluoride	30 g/l as ammonium bifluoride
Graphite	30 g/l, grain size 1 – 8 μm
pH value	4.5
Temperature	60° C
Current density	1 – 4 A/dm ²
Sn content in precipitate	30 – 40% depending on current density and temperature

AMENDED CLAIMS

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1. (amended) A battery sheath made of formed cold-rolled sheet metal, which is provided at least on an inside surface thereof with an electroplated coating selected from a group of metals consisting of Ni, Co, Fe, Sn, In, Pd, Bi and alloys thereof, wherein electrically conductive particles are embedded in dispersed form in the electroplated coating.
2. (amended) The battery sheath according to Claim 17 wherein the electroplated coating contains at least 0.7% elemental carbon.
3. (amended) The battery sheath according to Claim 1 wherein the electroplated coating has a thickness of at least 0.2 μm .
4. (amended) A process for manufacturing strip stock for battery sheaths in which 0.1 to 1 mm thick cold-rolled sheet metal is provided on at least one side with a coating selected from a group consisting of Ni, Co, Fe, Sn, In, Pd, Bi and alloys thereof, in an electroplating bath, whereby the electroplating bath comprises as an additional component electrically conductive particles such that the particles are deposited on the sheet metal during electroplating together with the coating.
5. (amended) The process according to Claim 20 wherein the sheet metal is coated with the electroplating coating provided with the electrically conductive particles on the side that faces inwardly when the sheet metal is formed into a battery sheath.
6. (amended) The process according to Claim 20 wherein the carbon is suspended in the electroplating bath as finely distributed carbon, graphite, or carbon black particles.
7. (amended) The process according to Claim 6 characterized by a particle size of the carbon, graphite, or carbon black particles of 0.5 μm to 15 μm .

8. (amended) The process according to claim 4 wherein a steady flow is created in the plating electrolyte tank during the plating process.
9. (amended) The process according to Claim 8 characterized in that the steady flow is produced by mechanical agitation, circulation, or flooding.
10. (amended) The process according to Claim 8 characterized by a forced flow velocity of the electrolyte of 6 to 10 m/s.
11. (amended) The process according to claim 8 characterized in that the electroplating bath contains suspension stabilizing and/or coagulation reducing substances.
12. (amended) The process of claim 4 wherein the plating electrolyte contains substances that produce hard, brittle layers (the so-called brighteners).
13. (amended) The process of claim 4 wherein the plating electrolyte contains brighteners or pore-sealing substances.
14. (amended) The process of claim 20 wherein the electrolytic deposition occurs in several stages, and the electrolyte contains elemental carbon in at least one said stage.
15. (amended) The process of Claim 14 wherein the material is heat-treated or annealed between electroplating treatment stages.
16. (amended) The process of claim 14 wherein the material is heat-treated, particularly annealed, at the end of the electroplating treatment stages.
17. (new) The battery sheath of claim 1 wherein the electrically conductive particles are selected from a group consisting of: titanium disulfide, tantalum disulfide, molybdenum silicide, elemental carbon in the form of fine carbon, graphite or carbon black, and combinations thereof.

- [illegible]

Abstract

A battery sheath made of formed and cold-rolled sheet metal as well as a process for manufacturing the battery sheath are proposed. In the process, cold-rolled strip stock is provided on at least one side with a coating of Ni, Co, Fe, Sn, In, Pd, Bi or their alloys in an electroplating bath, e.g., a Watts-type bath. As an additional component, the electroplating bath contains electrically conductive particles such as carbon, carbon black, graphite, TiS_2 , TaS_2 , MoSi_2 . These particles are deposited on the base material during electroplating together with Ni, Co, Fe, Sn, In, Pd, Bi or their alloys. The sheet metal side with, for example, the carbon-containing electroplated coating faces preferably inwardly when the sheet is formed into a battery sheath. Batteries with battery sheaths produced in this manner exhibit reduced increase in internal resistance, even with prolonged storage, as compared to known batteries.

CH/wi/bf

COMBINED DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

**(ORIGINAL, DESIGN, NATIONAL STAGE OF PCT, SUPPLEMENTAL, DIVISIONAL,
CONTINUATION, OR C-I-P)**

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

TYPE OF DECLARATION

This declaration is for a national stage of PCT application.

INVENTORSHIP IDENTIFICATION

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below, next to my name. I believe that I am an original, first and joint inventor of the subject matter that is claimed, and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

TITLE OF INVENTION

BATTERY SHEATH MADE OF A FORMED COLD-ROLLED SHEET AND PROCESS FOR
MANUFACTURING BATTERY SHEATHS

SPECIFICATION IDENTIFICATION

The specification was described and claimed in PCT International Application No. EP99/07961 filed on October 20, 1999 and was amended under PCT Article 19 on November 17, 2000.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF REVIEW OF PAPERS AND DUTY OF CANDOR

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information, which is material to patentability as defined in 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56, and which is material to the examination of this application, namely, information where there is a substantial likelihood that a reasonable Examiner would consider it important in deciding whether to allow the application to issue as a patent.

PRIORITY CLAIM (35 U.S.C. Section 119(a)-(d))

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(d) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate or of any PCT international application(s) designating at least one country other than the United States of America listed below and have also identified below any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate or any PCT international

application(s) designating at least one country other than the United States of America filed by me on the same subject matter having a filing date before that of the application(s) of which priority is claimed.

Such applications have been filed as follows.

**PRIOR FOREIGN APPLICATION(S) FILED WITHIN 12 MONTHS
(6 MONTHS FOR DESIGN) PRIOR TO THIS APPLICATION
AND ANY PRIORITY CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. SECTION 119(a)-(d)**

COUNTRY	APPLICATION NUMBER	DATE OF FILING DAY, MONTH, YEAR	PRIORITY CLAIMED UNDER 35 U.S.C. SECTION 119
Germany	198 52 202.9	12 November 1998	yes

POWER OF ATTORNEY

I hereby appoint the following practitioner(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

APPOINTED PRACTITIONER(S)	REGISTRATION NUMBER(S)
Stephen L. Grant	33,390
R. Eric Gaum	39,199
Robert J. Clark	45,835
Mark A. Watkins	33,813
Alexander D. Bommarito	44,036
John D. DeLong	44,648
Scott M. Oldham	32,712
Edwin W. Oldham	22,003
Eryn R. Ace	44,491
Michael H. Minns	31,985

I hereby appoint the practitioner(s) associated with the Customer Number provided below to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO

DIRECT TELEPHONE CALLS TO:

Stephen L. Grant
330-864-5550

Stephen L. Grant
Twin Oaks Estate
1225 West Market Street
Akron, OH 44313-7188
USA

Customer Number 021324

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

SIGNATURE(S)

1-00
Ferdinand SCHMIDT
Inventor's signature Ferdinand Schmidt
Date _____ Country of Citizenship Germany
Residence Duesseldorf Germany
Post Office Address Kammersrathfeldstrasse 56, DE-40953 Duesseldorf Germany DEX

2-00
Anette SCHENCK
Inventor's signature A. Schenck
Date 25.4.01 Country of Citizenship Germany
Residence Duesseldorf Germany
Post Office Address Liebigstrasse 23, DE-40479 Duesseldorf Germany DEX

3-00
Beate MONSCHEUER
Inventor's signature B. Monscheuer
Date 25.4.01 Country of Citizenship Germany
Residence Monheim Germany
Post Office Address Kantstrasse 7A, DE-40789 Monheim Germany DEX

4-00
Helmut KOSSLERS
Inventor's signature H. Kossler
Date 27.4.01 Country of Citizenship Germany
Residence Schwalmtal Germany
Post Office Address Kirchstrasse 12, DE-41366 Schwalmtal Germany DEX

5-00
Dr. Nikolaus FERENCZY
Inventor's signature Nikolaus Ferenczy
Date 25th Apr. 2001 Country of Citizenship Germany
Residence Haan Germany
Post Office Address Paul-Klee-Strasse 28, DE-47781 Haan Germany DEX

6-00
Annette BORISCH
Inventor's signature A. B.
Date 02.05.2001 Country of Citizenship Germany
Residence Wuppertal Germany
Post Office Address Charlottenstrasse 33, DE-42105 Wuppertal Germany DEX

7-00
Dr. Werner OLBERDING
Inventor's signature W. Olberding
Date 26. April 2001 Country of Citizenship Germany
Residence Velbert Germany
Post Office Address Am Feldgen 32, DE-42553 Velbert Germany DEX